

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to express my concern over media consolidation, as evidenced by the recent decision by Sinclair Broadcasting to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election.

I have noticed an appalling lack of substantive local content on my local television stations. I am not a broadcaster, but I am familiar with general business practices. Large companies which own many media outlets may be saving money through consolidation and streamlining of content; but this is to the detriment of needed public discourse in a free, local forum.

For example, Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Please use more diligence in achieving balance between the well-funded-and-communicated needs of broadcast companies and those of the local citizen. People like me do not focus on media activities like Sinclair does, because it is not where we make my money; yet we depend on the FCC to ensure that media content serves our interests.

Sinclair's broad action across local markets smacks of mass advertising at best and national election manipulation at worst, neither, of which, enrich local participation in our democracy. If they are allowed to own so much of the media "pie," then they should be required to provide equal time for the airing of other opinions that we need to hear to make informed decisions, particularly this close to an election when such actions can greatly impact the course of our nation. Furthermore, they should be required to devote more time to local content during prime time, beyond local news programming, in order to remind communities of their ownership of the airwaves and to engage their participation in needed public discourse.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard.

I am responding as an individual and, as such, would like my name and address withheld from publication.

Thank you.